DONNY CATES
RYAN STEGMAN
ABSOLUTE
CARNAGE
#1
PARKER
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1673

Carnage Will Dominate the Summer, Absolutely!

Get ready, it's going to be a Carnage summer.

Readers got their first hint of what was to come in the pages of May's ***Free Comic Book Day 2019 Spider-Man/Venom #1,*** which features a lead-in teaser to the big event. But the story launches in earnest on August 7th with the release of the extra-length ***Absolute Carnage #1*** by *Donny Cates & Ryan Stegman.*

"Cletus Kasady is back, and he is deadlier than he's ever been," *Donny Cates* said in a Marvel video announcement of the high-profile summer event. "***Absolute Carnage*** encompasses every single character who has ever worn a symbiote and every symbiote that has ever been, going all the way back to when Peter found the black suit. Going from there to ***Maximum Carnage*** to ***Venomized*** to everything... *everyone* is a target."

The 60-page kickoff story reunites Cates with *Ryan Stegman,* his creative partner for the first 12 issues of the fan-favorite ***Venom*** series. Stegman not only got to illustrate the main series, but he also was given the opportunity to come up with a new Carnage design, a process that he describes as "awesome! Honestly, I can't get enough of drawing him. Carnage is an all-time favorite character, and to get to kind of tweak his design to be even scarier is a dream come true."

Stegman assures readers that the 60-page lead story is high-energy action adventure all the way. "The first issue is 60 pages, and like 55 of those pages were cool, exciting things to draw. All these great page turns and moments. Without being to spoiler-y, I will say I got to draw a character that I've never drawn before and give him a new identity that will really get fans talking."

Stegman describes his working relationship with *Donny Cates* as (appropriately enough) "symbiotic. As in, Donny and I are always completely on the page somehow. We like the same stuff, and I can see his scripts in my head immediately upon reading them. It's a perfect marriage of writing style and art style."

Absolute Carnage #1, an extra-length $7.99 comic with a 60-page lead story (that's almost three comics' worth of story and art!), is scheduled for August 7th release.

by Cliff Biggers

The Lethal and the Dead(pool)

Frank Tieri may need a symbiote of his own to keep up with his writing responsibilities. Tieri has been tapped to helm *two* ***Absolute Carnage*** tie-in limited series—***Absolute Carnage: Lethal Protectors*** and ***Absolute Carnage versus Deadpool***—so he's more deeply involved with the event than any writer other than ***Absolute Carnage*** mastermind *Donny Cates* himself!

Just who are the Lethal Protectors? "It's Iron Fist—who will be the one actually bringing about this little mismatched family reunion—along with Morbius the Living Vampire, Cloak and Dagger, Firestar, and... well, I'll keep the last participant a bit of a surprise," Tieri said.

"Now then, if this all sounds familiar with this crew getting together like this, that might be because all these characters were a part of ***Maximum Carnage***. And it's because of that experience, because of their ability to take on Carnage and his symbiotes, that Iron Fist brings the band back together for a very dangerous mission. More dangerous than even he knows.

"***Lethal Protectors #1*** basically picks up where I left off with my ***Cult of Carnage*** oneshot where we see John Jameson has been compromised and Misty Knight is in danger. And you know if Misty's in trouble, Iron Fist's not going to be far behind. But as he and the rest of the Lethal Protectors find... Misty might not be the only one who'll need help before everything's said and done."

Their efforts will bring them face to face with Demogoblin... and that's *got* to be bad news. "The *baddest,*" Tieri said. "So yeah, Carnage wants to get as much of the old Max Carnage gang back together as possible. We've already seen Doppelganger and Shriek show up in ***Cult,*** but now he has eyes on resurrecting his Hellfire-spewing pal Demogoblin.

"And that's exactly what he does. Only this time... things are different. Demogoblin is Demagoblin for one thing—as this time he's a she. And she's got a connection to a longtime Marvel character who let's just say doesn't see the end of ***Lethal Protectors #1***. Sacrifices have to sometimes be made, after all..."

Meanwhile,

Courtesy of your friendly neighborhood comics outlet!

Deadpool's dealing with his own symbiotic problems, right? "Well, as is often the case with Deadpool, he's the cause of most of his own problems—and other people's," Tieri said. "In this case, it's actually Wade's relationship with Spider-Man that sparks his involvement here. Spidey's at the end of his rope with Deadpool because, well... Deadpool is Deadpool... and sends him to Ravencroft to get some long-overdue shrink work. But that's not all he finds there—he'll find his ol' sparring partner Carnage has already set up shop there... and incidentally hasn't exactly forgotten his last go-around with Poolboy from ***Deadpool versus Carnage.***"

In case you missed it, Deadpool already has a symbiotic history that would put him in the crosshairs. "It's pretty extensive, as it turns out," Tieri said. "You see, Deadpool was bonded at one point with no less than *four* different symbiotes. And since Carnage is tracking down anyone who ever merged with a symbiote, he realizes this makes Wade kind of special. He's a unicorn, if you will. And as Wade will soon find out the hard way, it'll very much be Unicorn-Hunting Season as far as he goes."

Are readers getting serious Deadpool or zany Deadpool here? "Why can't it be both?" Tieri asked. "Seriously, my view with writing Deadpool—and Harley Quinn for that matter—is more often than not, the humor comes from him but the threat should be serious. So yeah, Deadpool will be cracking jokes, making fun of the situation he's in... but make no mistake about it. Carnage means business, and the situation he's in is pretty damned dire.

"Even if Deadpool laughs the whole way through it."

Absolute Carnage versus Deadpool #1, illustrated by *Marcelo Ferreira,* is scheduled for August 21st release. ***Absolute Carnage: Lethal Protectors #1,*** a $3.99 comic illustrated by *Alberto Jimenez,* follows on August 28th.

by Cliff Biggers

And Miles to Go...

It's only logical to assume that Spider-Man will be a target in ***Absolute Carnage.*** But readers might be surprised to learn that it's the Miles Morales Spider-Man who's one of the first targets in the Carnage war.

Wait a minute—Miles Morales? Has he ever been friendly with a symbiote in his superhero career? "No, Miles has never worn a symbiote," editor *Kathleen Wisneski* said, "so this doesn't have to be his fight. But all of humanity is in danger, so Spider-Man can't just sit on the sidelines. When Miles runs into some of Carnage's followers on the streets of New York City, they recognize

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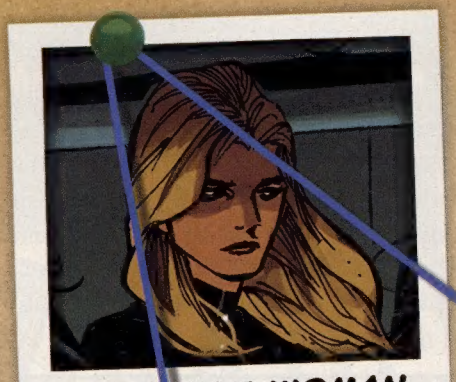

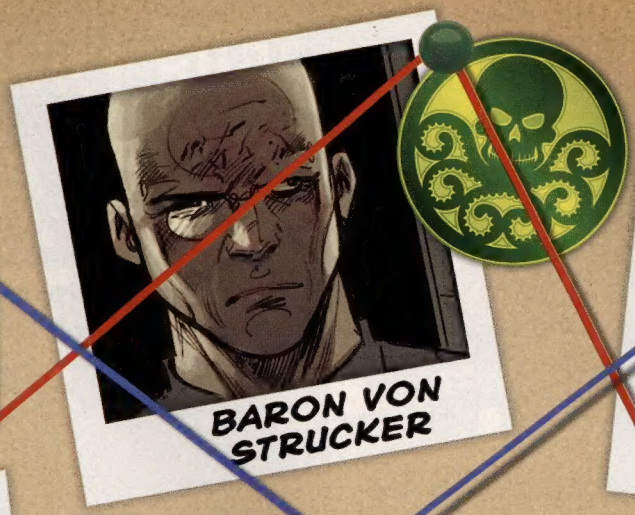

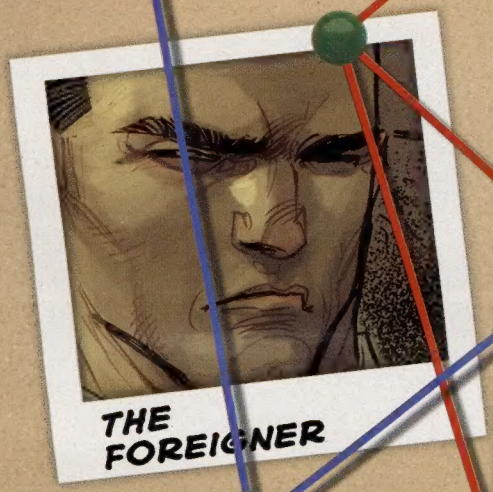

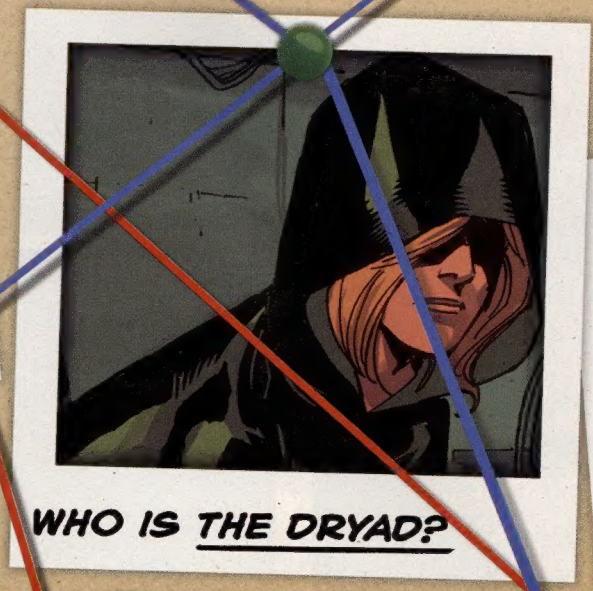

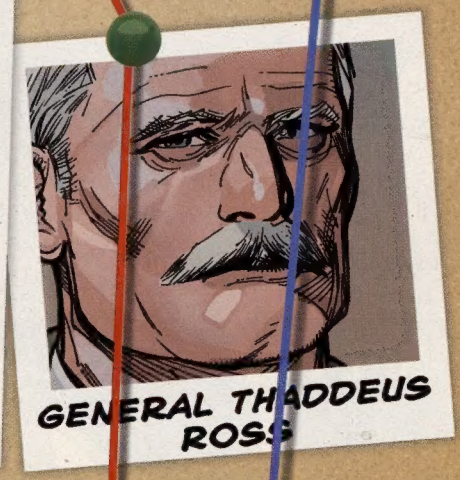

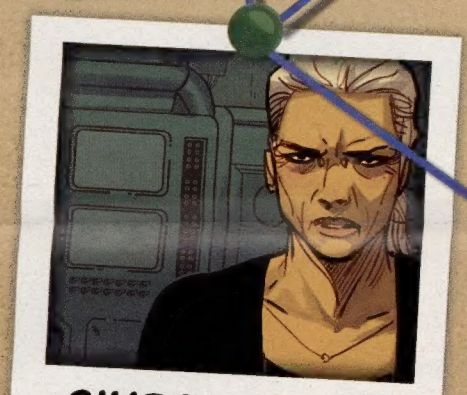

WHO IS THE SECRETIVE DRYAD - AND WHAT IS SHE PLANNING? BEGIN YOUR OWN INVESTIGATION WITH CAPTAIN AMERICA #13 - ON SALE AUGUST 2019!

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he'd be an asset on any side and he becomes a target. Miles might have to fight from behind enemy lines.

"The story starts with Miles stopping a run-of-the-mill robbery perpetrated by Scorpion (Mag Gargan)—but Mac has worn a symbiote, so both Carnage and Venom are looking to catch him and extract his codex."

While Miles has never been linked to a symbiote, he is familiar with the concept—and with Eddie Brock. "***Venom*** readers saw Miles interact with Eddie at the very beginning of Donnie's epic run—Miles was one of the first people on Earth to learn of the existence of Knull," Wisneski said. "It very nearly killed him, but he managed to save himself and Eddie—so Eddie owes him one. But even before that, symbiotes have always made Miles uneasy. They frighten and almost repulse him—like he holds a personal grudge against one. Miles' interaction with the Venom of the Ultimate universe might have left some scars on his subconscious."

Absolute Carnage: Miles Morales will test Miles' skills as a solo hero. "There are so many moving parts to worry about—heroes with codexes, villains with codexes, Carnage himself, and Knull off in the distance—Miles might be on his own for this one. Unless Carnage makes him a major chess piece on the board... in which case, you can be sure you'll see some other big-time Marvel heroes have to figure out how to save Miles."

Absolute Carnage: Miles Morales #1, a $3.99 comic by *Saladin Ahmed & Federico Vincentini,* is scheduled for August 21st release.

by Cliff Biggers

Scream of the Crop

Sometimes it's easy to forget that not all symbiotes have been malevolent killing machines—but Patricia Robertson, the star of ***Absolute Carnage: Scream,*** is one of the exceptions to the symbiote rule.

The series by *Cullen Bunn & Gerardo Sandoval* reintroduces a symbiotic hero first introduced more than a decade and a half ago. "Patricia is one of my favorite past symbiote hosts," editor *Devin Lewis* said. "She was first introduced in the fantastic 2003 ***Venom*** run by *Daniel Way & Francesco Herrera* as the original host of the Mania symbiote—the clone of Venom. She's one of the few people who knows what it's like to be bonded to a symbiote, which means she's one of the few people who knows what it takes to hunt 'em.

"Trouble is, that *also* makes her in possession of a precious codex, which makes her a target. Few symbiotes are stronger than Carnage, who outclasses even Venom.

"To make matters worse, Cletus is also wearing the remnants of the Grendel symbiote—so he's stronger than ever..."

Does Scream have what it takes to face off against a symbiote onslaught? "Of the original Life Foundation symbiotes, Scream's the toughest," Lewis said, "but the last we saw of Scream and its host, Donna Diego, both suffered a violent demise at the hands of Eddie Brock."

For Lewis, working on ***Scream*** in an editorial capacity is a sort of dream come true. "Scream's been my favorite symbiote since I started reading symbiote stories—which is basically when I started reading *comics*—so this is one of the most special projects I've ever gotten to work on, and seeing the work that Cullen and Gerardo have done has been a privilege. I can't wait for the world to get their hands on it!"

Absolute Carnage: Scream #1, a $3.99 comic, is scheduled for August 14th release.

Jonathan Hickman, X-Superstar

Does one man have the ability to wipe out the entire X-Universe and replace it with a new one of his own making?

Jonathan Hickman does.

Beginning in July, the entirety of Marvel's line of X-books will come to an end, clearing the deck for Hickman's ***House of X*** and ***Powers of X***—two titles that will reset the mutant universe and pave the way for a bold new direction. When these two series come to an end in September, Hickman will continue as writer of an ongoing X-Men flagship book.

What's the focus of ***House of X*** and ***Powers of X?*** "Well, they're really both the same story; each series just focuses on a different aspect of it," Hickman said. "***House of X*** is about the most piv-

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otal month in the history of Marvel mutantdom, and ***Powers of X*** is a look through the history of the X-Men to show the events that led to ***House of X*** and the future fallout of that historic month.

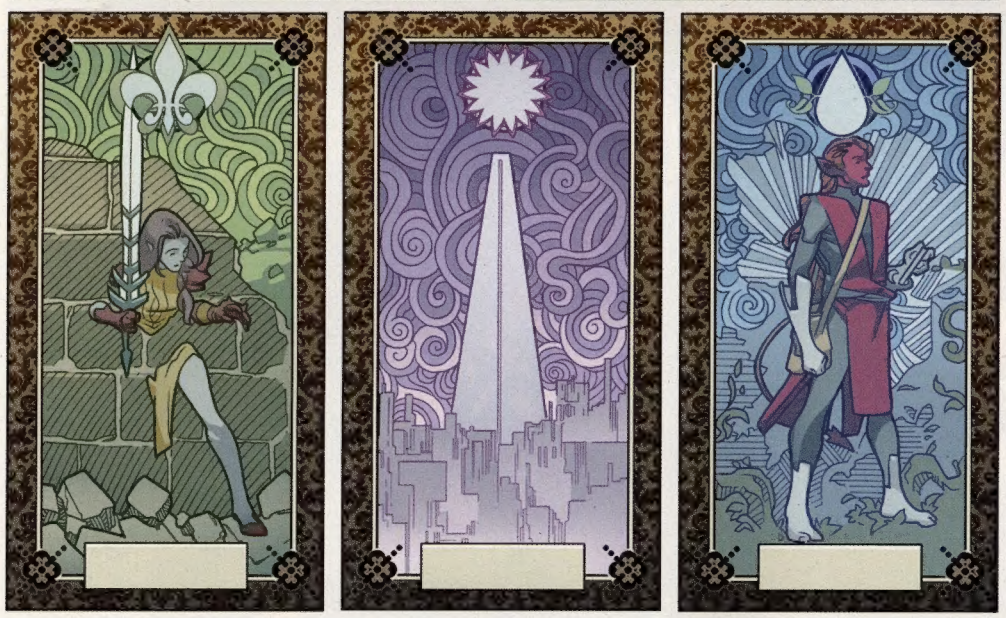
"It's really just a 12-issue maxi-series that reorients/repositions the X-Universe for the new line of X-books we're doing. A mutant Rosetta Stone, if you will.

"We needed to sell the idea that this is what we're going to be doing for the next few years. We wanted to be clear to the fans, to the stores, and just as importantly to the creators who are going to be staffing these books in the future. We wanted the message to be very clear: This is a whole new era for the X-Men. This is what we're doing now."

Hickman explained why Marvel chose to "clear the decks" of all other X-titles for this launch. "Hopefully, since these two books are the only X-Men books on the stands for the 12 weeks they come out, we'll be able to build some crazy velocity as we rocket into our 'wave one' launch of X-Universe books once the two minis end.

"I know it's difficult for stores to order, but we honestly believe that doing this on a compressed schedule is the best thing, both narratively and commercially. We'll see. Fingers crossed."

Marvel is promoting the series as one of the most significant changes to the X-Universe that readers have ever seen. In what way? Major new character introductions? Dramatic changes to existing characters? A new status quo for mutants in the Marvelverse? "I'd say it's mostly the latter," Hickman said. "We're just making some big moves in



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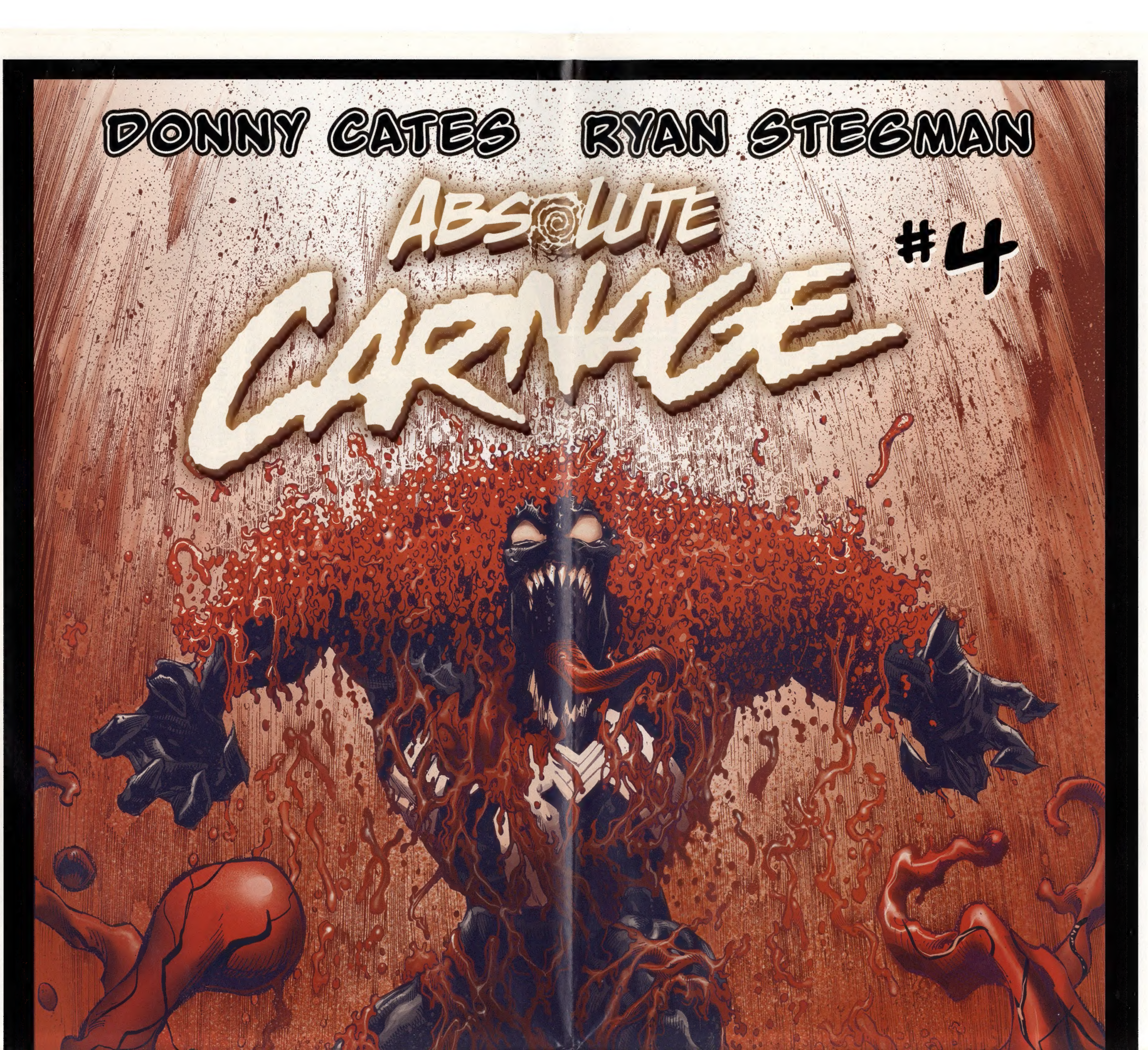

DON'T MISS A SINGLE SYMBIOTIC SMACKDOWN!

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- ☐ ABSOLUTE CARNAGE #1-2
- ☐ ABSOLUTE CARNAGE: LETHAL PROTECTORS #1
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- ☐ VENOM #17

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- ☐ ABSOLUTE CARNAGE #3
- ☐ ABSOLUTE CARNAGE: AVENGERS #1
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- ☐ ABSOLUTE CARNAGE: LETHAL PROTECTORS #2
- ☐ ABSOLUTE CARNAGE: MILES MORALES #2
- ☐ ABSOLUTE CARNAGE: SCREAM #2
- ☐ ABSOLUTE CARNAGE: SYMBIOTE SPIDER-MAN #1
- ☐ ABSOLUTE CARNAGE VS. DEADPOOL #2
- ☐ AMAZING SPIDER-MAN #30

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- ☐ ABSOLUTE CARNAGE #4
- ☐ ABSOLUTE CARNAGE: IMMORTAL HULK #1
- ☐ ABSOLUTE CARNAGE: LETHAL PROTECTORS #3
- ☐ ABSOLUTE CARNAGE: MILES MORALES #3
- ☐ ABSOLUTE CARNAGE: SCREAM #3
- ☐ ABSOLUTE CARNAGE VS. DEADPOOL #3
- ☐ AMAZING SPIDER-MAN #31
- ☐ VENOM #19

NOVEMBER 2019

- ☐ ABSOLUTE CARNAGE #5

regards to the mutants' place inside the Marvel universe. There will be some changes to existing characters, but it's my personal preference that those changes seem to be a natural reaction to the environmental changes that a particular character is undergoing.

"As for the first thing—I'm very much not interested in creating a bunch of new characters when I've been waiting a really long time to write the existing ones."

After *Matthew Rosenberg's* ***Uncanny X-Men*** brought a renewed focus on core X-characters like Wolverine and Cyclops, can readers expect to see them playing a significant role in ***House of X*** and ***Powers of X***? "There's no correct answer to this," Hickman joked. "Even if I lied and said that there won't be any Wolverine or Cyclops, no one would believe me.

"So, there *will* be Wolverine and Cyclops."

What will spin out of these two books? "We have an entire 'wave one' of books that will follow the two minis. I'll be writing the flagship book and some other stuff, and we have an entire team already hard at work on the rest. Some will be traditional fare, some carry through on ideas presented in ***House of X*** and ***Powers of X.*** Some books are completely new concepts."

The mutant reset begins on July 24th with the release of ***House of X #1,*** illustrated by *Pepe Larraz.* A week later, ***Powers of X #1*** debuts, illustrated by *RB Silva.* And from there, for the remainder of July and August, the Hickmanverse will replace the X-Universe, laying the groundwork for a major mutant relaunch in September.

by Cliff Biggers

Agents of Atlas Offers Pan-oramic View

It may seem like every Marvel villain targets New York City, but that's not the case. If you have any doubts, just check with the residents of the cross-Asian portal city of Pan.

In ***Agents of Atlas #1,*** *Greg Pak, Jeff Parker, Lim, Gang Hyuk, & Carlo Pagulayan* unleash the science-magic menace of a classic Marvel villain on the portal city—but they also introduce a new team of defenders.

Editor *Mark Paniccia* offered a run-down on the Agents of Atlas who are dedicated to keeping Pan safe. "You've got Jimmy Woo, who's still the number one of the organization and making a lot of the key decisions with Mr Lao, but with Amadeus as leader of the new team. Also on the roster: Shang-Chi, Luna Snow, White Fox, Crescent and Io, Silk, Aero, Sword Master, and of course Wave. There will be more heroes introduced. In the very first issue we'll meet Isaac Ikeda, a new character who will cause some... romantic complications, among other things."

The new team has a new base of operations as well. "The Atlas Foundation has bases all over the place," Paniccia said, "but the new team will be operating mostly out of Secret Bunker 394B located in Seoul."

In addition to the aforementioned classic Marvel villain, Paniccia said that "we're introducing a new villain—someone who's going to be a major disrupter and whose actions will have a domino effect on future events, the ramifications felt in the next arc and beyond."

What about the previous Agents of Atlas team? Well, you'll see them in action in the backup story in ***Agents of Atlas #1.*** "The original team is still together with the roster from their last series," writer *Jeff Parker* said, "so 3-D Man is still with them, and everyone knows what Bob Grayson really looks like now (an alien with a glowing brain). They still report to Jimmy, though he doesn't go on missions with them now; their current objective is to find a missing superhuman in Thailand. And they'll find out about a situation that has been building for a long time that's certain to need everyone in the Atlas network coming together."

"The story that Jeff and *Carlo Pagulayan* are telling will seem like a fun romp, but it's really something that'll have resonance in the series," Paniccia said. "And there's a very good chance we'll see more Namora, M-11, Venus, Marvel Boy, and Gorilla Man down the line."

What's it like working on a book with so many relatively new characters? "It's exciting," Paniccia said. "Many of these characters are brand-new, which is a cool flip on the original team who were all nostalgic characters taken from the '50s. Characters like Wave, Aero, Luna, White Fox, Crescent, and Sword Master are so rich, and there's so much to reveal about them. It's great to have a part of the Marvel Universe that is such unexplored territory. And watching Greg and Nico creating these new horizon is a true joy for me—and I know it will be for readers new and old."

Agents of Atlas #1, a $4.99 comic, is scheduled for August 5th release.

by Cliff Biggers

Marvel 1000: A Grand Ol' Comic!

Every now and then, a comic book concept bleeds over into reality. ***What If?,*** for instance—you know, the popular series that explores alternate realities and outcomes within the Marvel Universe. This August, "what if?" leaps from the comic book page to the comic shop rack as Marvel presents the 1000th issue of ***Marvel Comics***—the book that answers the question "What If ***Marvel Comics #1*** in 1939 had continued uninterrupted into 2019?" And, while the book features an amazing array of top artistic talent, *Al Ewing* is the man tasked with pulling it together in a single massive story. While Ewing doesn't write the entire book, his concept is the framework upon which every other storyteller constructs his or her contribution.

Putting together one comic to commemorate 80 years of Marvel Comics was every bit as challenging as it sounds. "It was a tough book to do," Marvel Executive Editor *Tom Brevoort* said, "and it really would have been impossible without Al. He's a mastermind when it comes to solving these sorts of storytelling puzzles, so when I described the project to him, he took the bull by the horns and worked out a starting point map for the whole of the issue. And while we deviated from that map along the way, in some instances pretty extremely, this gave us a structure to guide us along the way and to pull everything together.

"It was also difficult in terms of the sheer number of creators involved. If we actually get it to all work—the book hasn't been 100% completed as I write this—it'll be an amazing thing. There's never been so many top-shelf creators between the covers of a single comic book before. It truly is an awe-inspiring line-up of talent."

"It was quite a task putting this together," *Al Ewing* said. "In my origi-

LEAH WILLIAMS · DAVID BALDEÓN · COVER BY TERRY DODSON

GWENPOOL #1

STRIKES BACK!

GWENPOOL'S BACK - AND SHE'S PLAYING FOR KEEPS!

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nal map, I split it up into my narrative spine, then a number of pages with some thematic connective tissue, and finally a whole bunch of 'do what thou wilt' pages—ideally following the Marvel publishing timeline, but very much in the spirit of letting contributors find the particular part of Marvel history that appeals to them. With that done, I could dive right into my own piece of it and concentrate on that—and as soon as I did, a whole bunch of synchronicities and coincidences opened themselves up to me, with a few timely (no pun intended) suggestions from Tom suggesting new pathways and connections to follow. The result is that the central mystery of the book really feels like it was buried inside Marvel history from the start, just waiting to be discovered and unearthed—at least, that's the impression we hope to leave!

"As I said, certain patterns began to emerge very quickly. I'd be researching some long-forgotten piece of Marvel lore, and I'd find a line of dialogue that directly reflected the themes I'd already begun to build in. It's kind of a cop-out to say that a story 'writes itself,' but at the same time, when you're dealing with a project of this nature—where so much of it is outside your control and dependent on the artistic styles and individual quirks of so many different collaborators—it's worth opening yourself up to the flow of events. There'd be absolutely no way to do a project like this by being a hard-ass about it and demanding absolute control—the only way is to flow like water and allow the synchronicities that inevitably build up to do at least some of the writing for you. It's magical thinking, but it works."

Is each team doing a single page—and does that page focus on a single character? "Every team did a single page, yes, and each page corresponds in some fashion to the events of Marvel's publishing world in one of the 80 years we've been making comics," Brevoort said. "The only real exception to this structure is Al's component—he wrote just over 20 pages of the book. But each of his pages was done with a different artistic partner as well, so visually it's a clean narrative flow.

"The idea was really to build a superstructure that would allow each individual creative team to do the kind of page and story moment that they wanted to do, and to play with any and all of the characters from across the Marvel line, while still providing a unifying principle to the whole book and making each of the individual pages contribute to the overall whole in a meaningful way."

"And as I said above, the structure falls into three parts that'll make themselves apparent—there's my central mystery, and then connecting into that in subtle ways we have a number of pages that interrogate the heroes of the Marvel universe, getting into their heads, exploring questions of their purpose in the world, of what makes them who they are," Ewing added. "And then, of course, we have some terrific single pages that are just beautiful works of art in and of themselves—*Alex Ross* brings a take on the Hulk that I think should be entirely in canon, for example."

Are these standard multi-panel

DAN SLOTT • SEAN IZAAKSE • COVER BY ESAD RIBIĆ

Fantastic Four #13

THE THING VS THE IMMORTAL HULK

LAST MAN STANDING!

AUGUST 2019

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pages, or is each page a full-page panel? "Each page is different depending on what the creators involved chose to do," Brevoort said. "Some of them are a single large image; others have dozens of panels on them. We were open to all possibilities and everybody's creativity."

"Speaking for myself, I deliberately wrote in as many different styles as I could," Ewing said. "A lot of pages are a seven-panel structure that I've found is useful for conveying lots of information—see if you can spot it! But there's also, for instance, a beautiful splash page by *Christian Ward, Eduardo Risso* doing his usual gorgeously flowing storytelling, and so on. It was a lot of fun changing things up to suit different moments."

Why is the story of this issue so important to the Marvel Universe? "The story both unravels a mystery and a secret that is woven throughout 80 years of Marvel's publishing history and also introduces a new player into the Marvel Universe—somebody that you'll see again in the months to come,"Brevoort said.

"We're bringing in a new hero and some new/old villains to tell you that everything you've ever known about the Marvel Universe has been completely wrong, and also absolutely correct," Ewing said. "If you're a Marvel fan to any degree at all, we're going to break your brain in the best way."

"Our characters are mentioned in so many different ways and in so many different mediums and we always keep track," Marvel Editor-in-chief *CB Cebulski* said. "Now these distinguished individuals are able to contribute back to the comics they grew up on."

Marvel Comics #1000, a $9.99 comic scheduled for August 28th release, will feature work by an incredible array of top talents, including (but not limited to) *Al Ewing, Roy Thomas, Peter David, Gerry Conway, Adam Kubert, Saladin Ahmed, Gail Simone, Chip Zdarsky,* and *Kris Anka*—as well as talents outside of comics, like filmmakers *Phil Lord* and *Christopher Miller, Taboo* of the Black Eyed Peas, and basketball legend *Kareem Abdul-Jabbar.*

by Cliff Biggers

Gwen Stacy: "Make Mine Matriculation!"

Superheroes have all sorts of reasons to slip from one multiverse to another. Some do so to visit old acquaintances; others to enlist aid to save their own world, and some to see how different their lives could be. But Gwen Stacy? Well, she may be the first character to hop multiverses in order to go to school!

"Gwen wants to get a college education, and it's not really possible on Earth 65 right now," writer *Seanan McGuire* said. "So she's coming to 616 for an education!"

This isn't a permanent relocation, however. "Gwen could never abandon Earth 65," McGuire said. "She'll be commuting to college, like a lot of people her age. Her commute just involves dimensional travel."

While McGuire wouldn't say for sure which major Marvel heroes might cross paths with Gwen during her stay in Marvel-616, she did say that "I don't think it's avoidable" that Gwen will cross paths with some high-profile characters. "People are going to notice a new Spider in town."

Will anyone who knew the Marvel-616 Gwen recognize the Earth-65 Gwen during her stay? "Gwen's going to Gwen," McGuire teased, "and things are going to happen as they happen—without spoilers!"

Ghost-Spider #1, a $3.99 comic by *Seanan McGuire & Takeshi Miyazawa,* is scheduled for August 21st release.

by Cliff Biggers

DENNIS "HOPELESS" HALLUM ◆ EMILIO LAISO ◆ COVER BY SKAN

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SPIDER-MAN #1

VELOCITY

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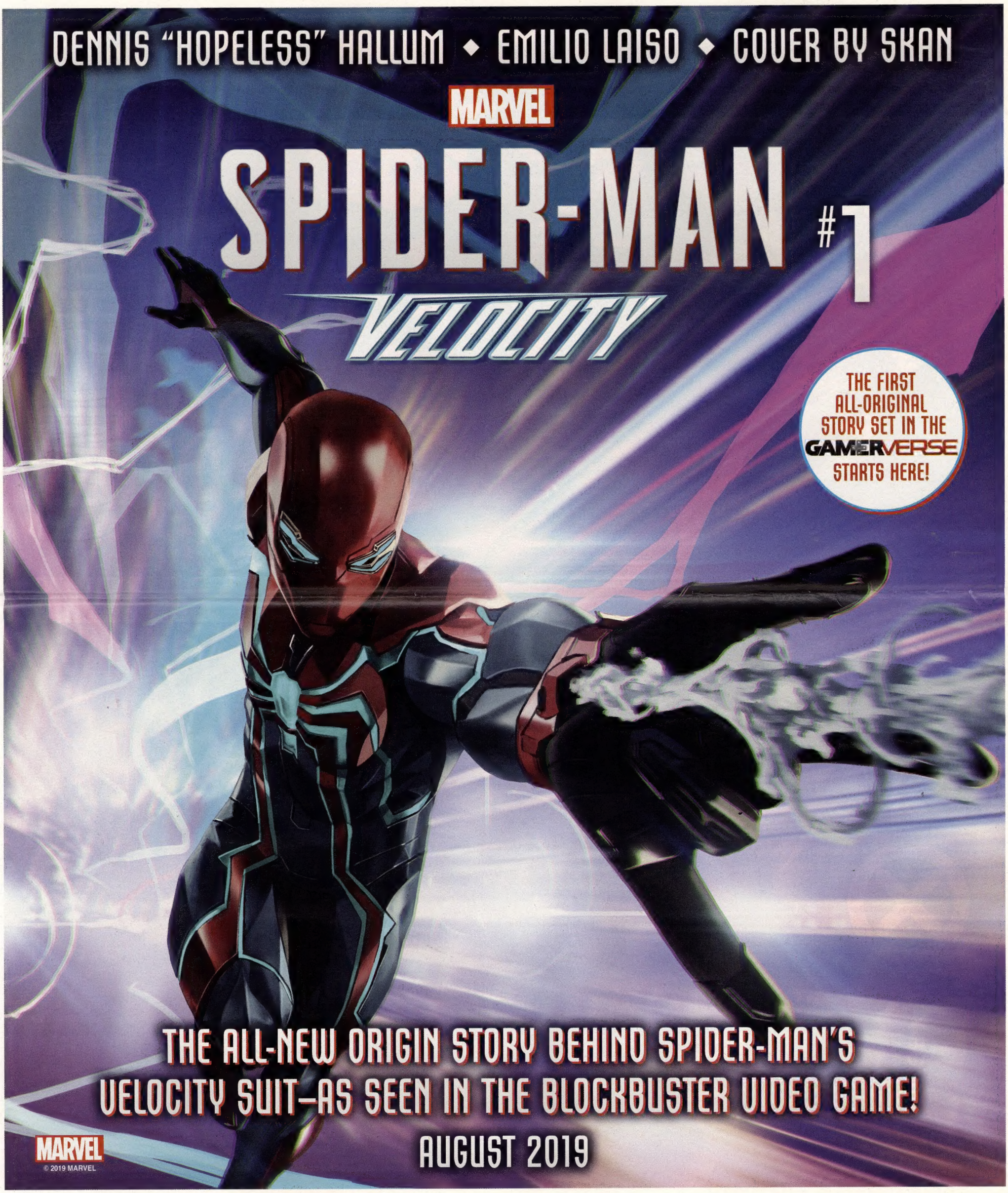

THE ALL-NEW ORIGIN STORY BEHIND SPIDER-MAN'S VELOCITY SUIT—AS SEEN IN THE BLOCKBUSTER VIDEO GAME!

AUGUST 2019

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